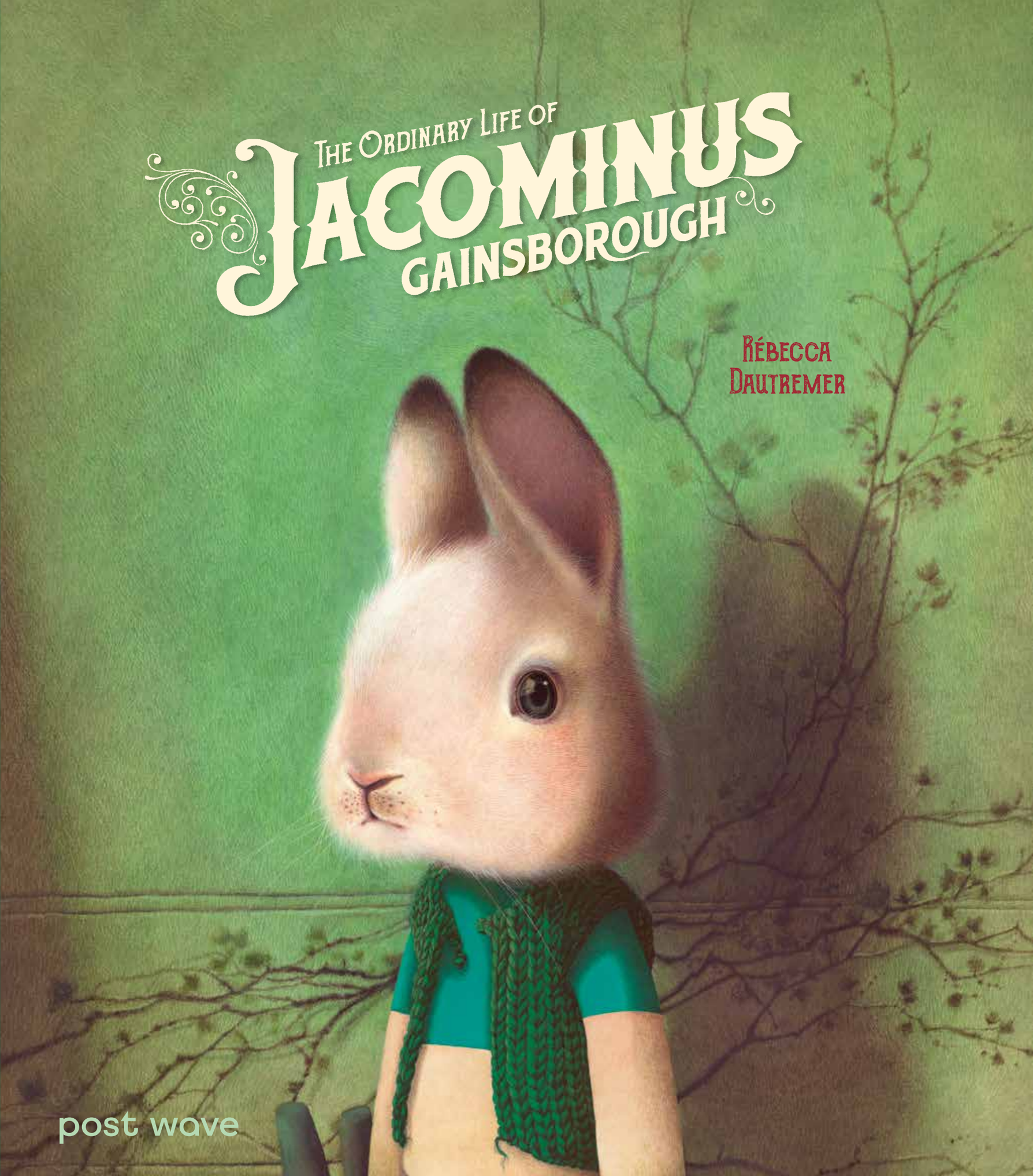
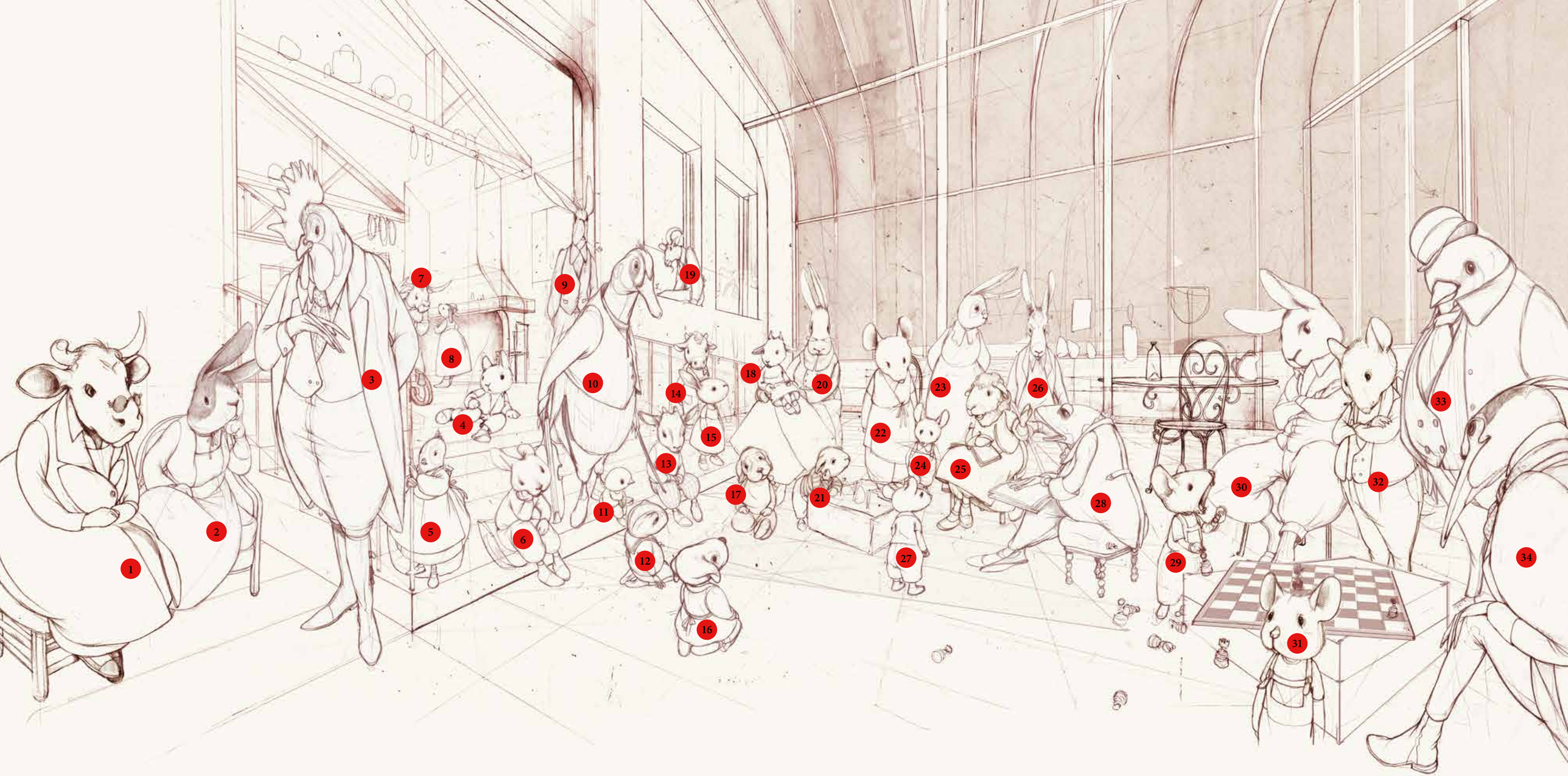
The Ordinary Life of Jacominus Gainsborough

Rébecca Dautremer



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1 **Isabule Magloire,** *mother of Polycarp*
2 **Eugenia Gainsborough née Chapoteaux,** *mother of Jacominus*
3 **Colbert Paradis,** *father of Opportune and Emil*
4 **Jacominus Gainsborough**
5 **Opportune Paradis,** *friend of Sweetie*
6 **Darius Gainsborough,** *older brother of Jacominus*
7 **Georges Magloire,** *father of Polycarp*
8 **Augustine Vidocq,** *friend of Eugenia*
9 **Joseph Sosthène,** *distant cousin of Eugenia*
10 **Javier Escobar,** *violin teacher*
11 **Emil Paradis,** *brother of Opportune*
12 **Caesar Bothorel,** *friend of Jacominus*
13 **Sacha Petarelle,** *son of Francis, friend of Darius*
14 **Polycarp Magloire,** *friend of Jacominus*
15 **Sweetie Vidocq,** *daughter of Augustine*
16 **Irene Bandy,** *sister of Byron, friend of Sweetie*
17 **Byron Bandy,** *friend of Jacominus*
18 **Castille Petarelle,** *sister of Sacha*
19 **Francis Petarelle,** *friend of Jan*
20 **Madeleine Chapoteaux,** *mother of Eugenia*
21 **Agathon Roy,** *friend of Jacominus*
22 **Marie Tedesco,** *wife of Bartolomy*
23 **Beatrix Gainsborough,** *mother of Jan*
24 **Olive Tedesco,** *sister of Leon and Napoleon*
25 **Mimi Roy,** *mother of Agathon*
26 **Jacominus Gainsborough the Elder,** *father of Jan*
27 **Fenelon Tedesco,** *cousin of Leon and Napoleon*
28 **Barbe Bothorel,** *neighbour and friend of Eugenia*
29 **Napoleon Tedesco,** *twin brother of Leon, son of Bartolomy and Marie*
30 **Jan Gainsborough,** *father of Jacominus*
31 **Leon Tedesco,** *twin brother of Napoleon, son of Bartolomy and Marie*
32 **Bartolomy Tedesco,** *neighbour*
33 **Philigore le Béchu,** *friend of Jan*
34 **Amray Cherif,** *tutor to the Gainsborough children*

You who hold this book in your hands: welcome to its story.
I've put a great deal of care into writing it and painting all the pictures.

Take your time and look closely as you turn the pages: if you do, you'll notice a lot of things.

If you're a grown-up, you might think this book, with all its pictures, isn't meant for you. Honestly!
What a funny idea! Of course this book is for grown-ups too!

If you're small, some parts of the book might seem a bit of a mystery. But don't worry: a little thinking goes a long way! And the words are only part of the story. If you come across a few you don't know yet, I'm sure you can find a grown-up to explain them. (In fact, that would be a good thing, because this book is meant to be shared.)

For example, I expect you're wondering what "The Ordinary Life" means? As I'm here, I'll tell you: it's a way of saying one thing but meaning another. We say a life was ordinary when what we actually mean is that it was wonderful.

That's what you're going to find out about in this book: the life of Jacominus."Why him?" you ask. (Or maybe the first thing you say is "What a funny name!" I know! But if you're having trouble, just say this rhyme: "Have you seen us, Jacominus?" There you go! Perfect!) To return to your question "Why him?"… Well, as Jacominus himself said: his life was worth living. So, I think it's also worth telling.

And now I hear you ask: "But what makes a life worth living?" I think I'll take a moment to clear my throat before answering that. You'll have to excuse me, as I must go and write another book now. Perhaps you can ask someone else.

Now, off you go. You'll do just fine, I know you will.

R. D.

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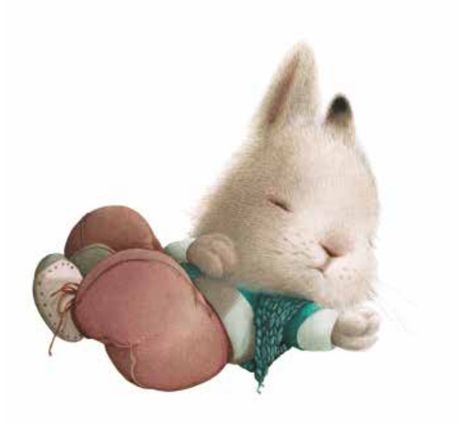
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When Beatrix Gainsborough witnessed the birth of her youngest grandson, she was filled with joy.
"He'll be named after his grandfather!" she declared.
"Isn't that a rather long name for such a teeny-tiny person?" asked the child's mother.

"Pompoms, ma chère,*" retorted Beatrix. "Jacominus Stan Marlow Lewis Gainsborough is a simple and elegant name, and it will suit this dear child perfectly!"
Mr and Mrs Gainsborough were so delighted at the arrival of their new baby that they wanted to make his grandmother happy too. And so, they named their son Jacominus. Short and sweet.

Rubbish, my dear.



The exact date of his birth is uncertain.
But there can be no doubt that Jacominus was born on a certain day, and it was most certainly the place in the picture. Mrs Gainsborough was definitely the mummy in the red dress, and Mr Gainsborough was clearly the daddy standing next to her.

But when you come to think about it, if Jacominus had been born somewhere else, on a different day, to a different mother and that chap over there, Jacominus wouldn't have been Jacominus at all!
He'd have been called Polycarp or Caesar, Agathon or Byron.
Or Leon, or maybe even Napoleon!
He might have been the boy in blue, or the little chicken in the pink spotty dress in the background.
Or perhaps the guy with the feathers, or the other one with the big ears?
Or – hey! – he could have been YOU! Why not?

Anyway, enough of all that. It's definitely Jacominus this book is about.
And no one else.



An ordinary life? What's that?
A life lived to the full…
The life of Jacominus Gainsborough.
Leaves blowing in the park, the rain, low tide.
A roly-poly, a quayside farewell, a happy hello in a garden full of stones.
A picnic, a sprint finish and the cool shade of the almond tree.
All those things.
A life.

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